Similar, if not identical, beings live beneath ~~the~~ rivers and lakes; they have often ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ been seen on the surface, and occasionally, ~~long~~, long ago, certain fortunate individuals saw their houses. Accounts of such are embodied in Bella Coola mythology and ~~can most profitably~~ will be described later; ~~with the exception of~~ The following ~~which~~ can be considered ~~as~~ an example of a simple type:

About three hundred years ago, txwumxwumlaix, a Kimsquit fisherman, built a pier-like framework projecting into ~~the Bean~~ the Salmon River, on which to stand while fishing for salmon with a long-handled scoop-net. One August ~~he was using his net~~ day ~~when~~, ~~but~~ after a number of successful sweeps, ~~he found~~ it became very heavy. As the head came to the surface he found, to his amazement, that a small boy was hanging on the rim. A number of people who had been watching from the shore, ~~and they all~~ called to him to throw away his net, ~~with its uncanny hand~~ but not heeding this advice, ~~earthly catch. Heedless of this advice,~~ txwumxwumlaix tried to lift it and, on finding it too heavy, began to ~~drag~~ draw it ~~through the water so as to haul it out on the shore.~~ ashore. All went well for the first few yards, ~~till~~ until suddenly the boy shoved against the net, pushing the fisherman into the water on the other side of the pier. ~~Immediately the supernatural boy~~ and then vanished from sight, ~~but~~ As the bystanders rushed to the rescue of txwumxwumlaix they saw him being carried downstream to a salmon-weir about three hundred yards below. The trap was raised at once, but it was too late; the rash fisherman was dead. No one could give a name to the supernatural being who had caused his death; it was merely one of those dwelling under the river. ~~supernatural ones.~~ Whales, too, are sometimes observed in the rivers, but though they appear to resemble those of the ocean they are really their supernatural ~~equivalents~~ prototypes.

These human-like dwellers beneath the water can, as in this case, cause death, but they are usually regarded as uncanny rather than ~~dreaded~~ dangerous. ~~But~~ There is, however, one undersea being whom the Bella Coola regard with unmixed awe; he is Q̈omoqwa, lord of the supernatural ones beneath the ocean, as Ä̈lquntäm is lord of those dwelling above. He lives in an enormous house ~~beneath~~ under the sea wherein the fish, the sea-mammals, and the sea-plants have ~~(1).~~ 2. The handles of nets of this type are said to have been about ~~thirty~~ thirty feet in length.

their home. The Bella Coola believe that these beings can ~~assume~~ take human form at will,(1) and assume that their behaviour in Q̓omoqwa's ~~house~~ dwelling corresponds to that of human beings in the ~~dwelling place~~ house of an earthly chief. In the beginning of time, when men were more powerful than in recent years, this house sometimes rose to the surface of the water and adventurous Bella Coola entered it on various occasions, leaving to their descendants ~~accounts~~ tales of the wonders it contained. These accounts have become family myths and are described with others of similar type in Chapter VI. ~~Accounts~~ Records of this kind vary greatly in detail; in fact, few agree ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ more than in broad outlines. Sometimes it is stated that ~~the~~ denizens of the sea appear in Q̓omoqwa's house in the flesh; ~~whereas~~ other myths describe ~~the~~ paintings of sea creatures around the walls and the manner in which these are brought to life by Q̓omoqwa. ~~At any rate,~~ Irrespective of the exact details, it is clear that Q̓omoqwa is chief of the undersea beings who serve him and hunt for him, the blackfish being especially proficient in this respect. Q̓omoqwa resents any slight to his protégés and punishes any mortal who is unkind to them.

Although Q̓omoqwa has often been seen by mortals, no one has ever been able to describe his ~~face.~~ countenance. He always wears a huge hat, beneath which his blackened ~~xxx~~ face, covered with eagle-down, is barely visible, since he constantly keeps turning it away from the observer. Occasionally he comes to the surface and has been known even to walk on it. Like other supernatural beings, he is able to ascend to Nusmat'a, though it ~~this~~ is not his home. The dread with which the Bella Coola regard Q̓omoqwa is due to his ability to suck canoes down to his home at the bottom of the ocean as if in a whirlpool. He is usually hungry, and nothing pleases him more than human flesh; ~~hence~~ (the less, he does not ~~suck down canoes and drown people~~ destroy life without ~~reason~~ cause. It angers him to hear his name spoken, and for this reason no Bella Coola ever utters it when on the ocean, for fear that he ~~will~~ may at once be engulfed. Whenever a person is drowned at sea it is believed that the cannibalistic Q̓omoqwa has drawn him down for a meal.

To insert the many stories describing Q̓omoqwa at this point would unduly break the

(1). Bella Coola concepts concerning the transformability of men and animals will be described in the next section of this chapter.

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continuity of this account, ~~of Bella Coola supernatural beings,~~ so the following simple story must suffice as a typical example.

Not many years ago four Bella Bella fishermen were trying to anchor near China Hat. Owing to the action of the supernatural beings dwelling below, the bottom of the ocean rose and lowered abruptly so that their anchor would not hold as the rope was often too short. They were much annoyed by this and, as they strove to fasten their craft, they were exasperated at a lard-fish which kept swimming close by around the canoe. At last one of the fishermen reached out, seized it with his hands, and tore it to pieces, throwing these back on the water. Presently their anchor held and the four went to sleep. But Q̓omoqwa had seen the insult shown to the lard-fish and, as they slept, he sucked down their canoe until, on awakening, they found themselves in the huge house of the lord of the undersea world. There was no water in it, but they recognised where they must be from the fact that the walls were decorated with paintings of ma- and with ancient tools from canoes lost at sea.
rine beings. An old woman (who) lives in Q̓omoqwa's house, ~~and she~~ called the four to her fire in the corner and asked them whether they had any of the plant called potsq̓ with them, if they had they would escape, but otherwise nothing could save them from Q̓omoqwa who at that very moment was in the act of calling his friends for a feast of human flesh. Presently Q̓omoqwa entered, followed in succession by a number of undersea chiefs, including the dreaded point, Mesatche Nose.(1) As each came in, the water rose and the canoe swirled as if in a whirlpool; if it had capsized the occupants would have been devoured, but on each occasion one of the hunters threw a morsel of potsq̓ on the surface which stilled the waves. At last Q̓omoqwa and his friends admitted themselves defeated, and granted the four fishermen the powers of shamans, ~~and~~ certain prerogatives.

It will thus be seen that Q̓omoqwa can, like all other supernatural beings, be overcome by human beings. Nor does he differ from other supernatural ones in being neither

(1). See page ,

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tirely good or entirely evil. Though he is usually unkind to mortals, and is correspondingly feared, instances are known in which he has bestowed shamanistic powers for no apparent reason. The Bella Coola say that the Bella Bella know more about Q̇omoqwa than they do, and add that this is natural enough since he is essentially an ocean being and the Bella Bella are ocean people. It is possible that the Bella Coola concepts of this supernatural ~~one~~ lore are entirely of Bella Bella origin. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that Q̇omoqwa appears ~~frequently~~ seldom in connection with the a·sɑok society (1), many of the rites of which came from Bella Bella, ~~and not~~ with the kusiut society.

Since human beings can only travel on the sea with the assistance of canoes, it is not surprising that the Bella Coola think of supernatural beings as doing likewise ~~the same~~. Their beliefs include at least three huge canoes, manned by supernatural beings. The most important is that of Noäkxn·ɪm, the name of its captain, whose crew consists of a number of supernatural birds and the Hermaphrodite. Every year they come from the land of the salmon and the berries, in the far west beyond the sea, and bear these to the coast of British Columbia. This belief, which runs counter to the conviction that Älquntäm caused ~~the~~ the animals and plants to grow, is merely one of the many inconsistencies of Bella Coola theology. Noäkxn·ɪm comes every ~~fa~~ autumn, on his way to attend the gathering of the supernatural beings in the land above, and his arrival in the Bella Coola River marks the commencement of the kusiut dances. He is one of the most important of kusiut patrons and his powers and functions ~~can be~~ are described ~~most profitably~~ in the chapter devoted to that subject. He does not appear frequently to human beings, though every Bella Coola knows of his existence.

Another supernatural canoe is that of Winwina. Like that of Noäkxn·ɪm, it too brings salmon and berries from their home in the extreme west. Knowledge of this canoe is limited to certain families who own stories connected with it, and it likewise serves as patron for kusiut dancers. Although both Noäkxn·ɪm and Winwina can easily destroy human beings, ~~by their enormous power, but~~ they usually pay no attention to them, and have even been known to

(1). See page .

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below supernatural power. ~~Dawins will be described in connection with Rabbit dances. (1).~~ (See Chapter XI).

The Whirlpool is termed Winïs di Sä'tldjo'ba, the War Party of the Tide, or Winïs di Q-ïd, the War Party of the Ocean. The home of this among is a small island in the ocean. It consists of a large canoe, manned by invisible submarine beings, from whom the sea-otter, who are able to drive it at tremendous speed the way they wish. The members of the crew are not in themselves dangerous, but the craft is greatly feared because it always transports Sale'ic. This is a coal, brown in colour, and of jelly-like substance; it lies in the bottom of the lake from which water is boiled, and is a concentrated mass of repulsive jelly. Poison is extracted from it, and those who handle it are in danger of emanating poison. Sometimes it is found on the beach, and is then eaten as food. Those who die at once, with open shells, and upon finding that an accident has happened and does not eat them, will keep for a considerable period, though saturated with the poisonous venom. If anyone eats these shell-fish, he dies, and soon dies, and is a powerful sorcerer. Can succeed in conquering the poison. Sometimes when a party is encamped on the shore of the ocean, one is the person selected by the Whirlpool to be the killer of the War Party of the Tide. If he is chosen he at once calls out, "Wi···". This serves to notify the rest of the party that they are to [illegible] from the War Party at a distance, who instantly throw all objects which have been in contact with the [illegible].

Many stories are told by the Bella Coola of the [illegible] of Sä'tldjo'ba. The following can be regarded as typical.

Not many years ago, a hunter named Chikotl, and his wife, Mïtlä, were encamped on Labouchere Channel at the point known as Nuscwl, near the Hot Springs. They were

(1). ~~See page [illegible] in the third part of this chapter.~~

discussing a private matter when, to the amazement of both, their bitch, who was with them, joined in the conversation. This unnatural behaviour should have warned them of approaching danger and they ~~should~~ ought to have killed the animal, as indeed the woman desired to do. But Onikot~~i~~ foolishly refused and they presently lay down to sleep. In some mysterious manner the dog was able to ~~call~~ summon the War Party of the Tide, which carried the two away. When they awoke they were in the dread canoe, and the poison from Sxlo'xt' was spreading over them. They were powerless and could only lie still as the canoe travelled up South Bentinck Arm, circled the island near Tal'io at its head, ~~and~~ then three other islands on ~~his~~ the return journey. The two were put ashore at their camp, apparently unharmed, but they knew the danger to which they had been exposed and fled ~~the~~ next day to Kimsquit. The woman told a shaman what had happened and accepted his somewhat drastic treatment. ~~In~~ Consequently, ~~she began to show~~ ~~signs of becoming insane~~ though she showed incipient signs of insanity ~~and~~ the was cured. The headstrong Onikot~~i~~, on the other hand, refused to pay attention to the danger; within a few weeks he became crazy and soon died.

~~Section 5.~~ Quite another category of Bella Coola supernatural beings ~~consists~~ consists of Ghosts. These beings, once human, have passed by death into the ranks of the supernatural. Their home is the land below the earth where they lead an existence resembling that of mortals except that everything is strange ~~and~~ but ethereal. In form they resemble human beings, but their faces are green and ~~strange~~ weird. Ghosts can visit the land of the living at will, and make their presence known by whistling, which is their language. Their actions are unusual, the reverse of ~~those of humans~~ those of humans; for example, they often walk backwards, or on their heads. Mortals sometimes see Ghosts, but ~~the~~ Seeing an apparition seals their lips so that they cannot recount their experiences. Death invariably follows. ~~and soon die.~~ Shamans and other mortals endowed with great powers have been able to penetrate to the ~~land~~ realm of Ghosts, and the knowledge of conditions there has been derived from their accounts. Food is scarce in the land below and ~~for this reason~~ Ghosts are often driven up to ~~this~~ earth ~~in a~~ to search for ~~food~~ it. Even a ~~small~~ small morsel is enough to satisfy their hunger, so ~~mortals~~ that mortals throw small fragments on the fire for the benefit of ~~their~~ dead relatives. If a person drops a crumb

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it is because a Ghost has hooked it away from his hands; ~~and~~ no wise Bella Coola ever picks up such a morsel, knowing that to do so would offend the hungry Ghost. Deceased beings are generally feared, although instances are known in which they have ~~showed~~ shown kindness, particularly to their relatives. Like so many supernatural beings, they figure most prominently as patrons of kusiut dancers and are described as such in Chapter XI. Further information concerning them is contained in the description of life after death, so no further details need be given at this point.

No list of ~~supernatural~~ beings, even if complete, would exhaust the beliefs of the Bella Coola concerning the supernatural, since any unexpected visitation is attributed by them to this source. For example, when Mackenzie, the first white man with whom the Bella Coola ~~came~~ had come in contact, appeared, it seemed clear to them that he must be a supernatural visitor. Some thought ~~that he must be a~~ him a dead man returned to life, and others ~~that he was~~ considered him a supernatural visitor from above who had fallen down to earth, as did their first ancestors. ~~This~~ The latter view prevailed, and it was ultimately decided that he must be Qomcua, a supernatural being resident ~~above~~ aloft of whom little was known. This name was applied to him, and it has since been given to all white men. It is only one hundred and twenty-five years since ~~he~~ Mackenzie visited Bella Coola, and a number of stories are still current ~~of incidents connected with~~ that historic event. What most impressed the Bella Coola was his ability to make fire in a manner that appeared to them ~~to be~~ extraordinarily rapid. One of my informants stated that he had heard from his mother that he: father had ~~greeted~~ spoken with him. Folk-lore of this type is valuable as ~~a~~ reflecting ~~the~~ psychology of a people, but its historical accuracy may well be doubted. One of the ~~informx~~ writer's Kimsquit informants, for example, stated definitely that his mother had told him ~~that~~ Mackenzie came down the Salmon River when her uncle was a young man. As if to confirm this statement he added the inconsequential details that Mackenzie, in dire straits for food, killed and ate a dog, and that he was given a marmot skin blanket.

The ~~religious~~ ~~beliefs~~ of the Bella Coola ~~are~~ is not limited to explanations of strange apparitions, nor to ~~belief in~~ knowledge of a wide range of supernatural beings having anthropomorphic

S: Was this all he did? Also "a dance with him" might be better.

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or zoomorphic form. Many of their beings are invisible and intangible, though none the less potent. Almost every incident of life is attributed to the help or hindrance of a supernatural being. A fisherman decides to construct a salmon-weir, and does so after a considerable amount of work. A white man would consider that his success was due to the labour expended, but the Bella Coola know that only the assistance of some supernatural being or supernormal power enabled him to do so; mere labour would never suffice. A man may have phenomenal success in hunting, but it is because the supernatural has assisted him in some way. It is not necessary that an anthropomorphic form should appear; they realise that this is seldom the case, but they are quite convinced that in some form or another the supernatural ones have aided the enterprise.

This attitude, of tremendous importance in understanding the psychology of the tribe, is clearly evident in Bella Coola beliefs concerning the construction of canoes.

Many professions depend upon prerogatives without which a person cannot hope to succeed. This is not true for canoe-makers, although it is of great advantage to a man if Yulätimut, the Master Carpenter, appeared to his ancestors in the beginning of time. Even without this a man can often succeed in making a canoe if he is aided by the supernatural Teacher, or Model Maker. few carpenters. No one knows much about this being, nor even whether there is more than one of them, but it is through his kindly intervention that a man is able to carry out the complicated task of manufacturing a canoe. When carpenters have left a canoe, half-completed, in the woods and are returning to their work, they sometimes hear adze beats, and remain away from the spot knowing that their work is being done with superhuman efficiency by a supernatural artisan. Under such circumstances even a single man can complete one of the large, ocean-going canoes. It is only about forty years ago that a carpenter, named Yaxlin, was making a canoe at Restoration Bay. He had reached the point where he needed assistance to turn the craft over, and one day was returning to his work when he heard the sound of many voices. He tarried for a few minutes, but when he arrived at the spot his canoe had been turned as he desired.

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~~In this last~~ On that occasion incident the beings who assisting ~~ed~~ the canoe-maker appear to have had definite form, ~~and~~ certainly to have displayed physical strength. The writer believes ~~that~~ this extreme anthropomorphizing to be unusual ~~with respect to~~ in the assistance given to carpenters. The ~~manufacture~~ construction of a canoe is an arduous ~~and complicated task;~~ difficult work; the person who has ~~done~~ made one is regarded by his fellows with respect mixed with envy, and it is tacitly assumed that he must have received supernatural assistance. Considering the number of anthropomorphic beings known to the Bella Coola, it is not surprising that ~~some~~ certain individuals ~~would~~ should assume that the successful carpenter ~~must have~~ had received assistance from one of ~~them beings~~, but to ~~many~~ other Bella Coola the explanation would ~~be~~ just in the intangible help vouchsafed ~~to~~ him by ~~a~~ of supernatural ~~patron of~~ power some kind. You mean some sort of power in trees?

Similar intangible power is believed to ~~be evident~~ in a person's thoughts. If a man receive either good or evil from a comrade it is his duty and privilege to ~~repay~~ make a return. He intends to do so, but it is only a good man who can carry out ~~his~~ the resolution. What ~~a white man~~ anyone would attribute to forgetfulness, ~~of lassitude~~ procrastination, the Bella Coola say is caused by the intervention of Sn!tqwaln!kaista, who steals ~~away his~~ thoughts. It is doubtful whether this ~~is ever conceived of as having~~ being considered to have anthropomorphic form, or any other, ~~form.~~ He ~~It~~ is a barrier, normally situated within the doorway of every house. The ideas of a ~~A~~ strong man ~~is~~ are able to surmount this ~~barrier~~ obstacle or obstruction, but Sn!tqwaln!kaista steals ~~away~~ those of a weakling, and directs him to matters of no importance.

Another intangible supernatural being is that which devours fire wood. The Bella Coola say ~~that~~ no matter how well a fire may be provided with fuel when a person sits down to a meal, it is certain to be either out, or nearly so, when he has finished eating. A white man often suffers ~~from~~ the same misadventure, but the natural cause, which chemical action, ~~appeals to him as~~ his explanation does not satisfy the Bella Coola. No one knows the name of this fire~~s~~ devourer and it may be that he lacks anthropomorphic form. Another mystery of similar type is what becomes of the consumed wood. Of course the Bella Coola are ignorant of the law of conservation of matter, but they realise that the wood must have gone somewhere, and postulate a land far across the western sea where burnt wood lies in

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